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Chairman: Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Uruguay)

CONTENTS

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 144: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE TO ALLEVIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR IN CROATIA AND TO FACILITATE ITS RECOVERY

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

AGENDA ITEM 86: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FINANCING OF DEVELOPMENT (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.40 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 87: SPECIAL ECONOMIC AND DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE (continued)

(b) SPECIAL PROGRAMMES OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (continued) (A/47/554 and A/47/573)

AGENDA ITEM 144: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE TO ALLEVIATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR IN CROATIA AND TO FACILITATE ITS RECOVERY (A/47/242; A/C.2/47/2)

1. Mr. OMAYAD (Department of Political Affairs), speaking on agenda item 87 (b), introduced the report of the Secretary-General on special assistance to front-line States and other bordering States (A/47/573). He recalled General Assembly resolution 46/172 and said that the report described the actions taken by Member States and by organizations of the United Nations system pursuant to that resolution. Some of those efforts also reflected the special needs experienced by the front-line States as a result of the drought in the region.

2. Mr. ABU AUF (Sudan), speaking on agenda item 87 (b), said that unfair criticisms had been levelled against his country during the debate on the emergency situation in the Sudan. He pointed out that the emergency in his country was the result of many factors in operation since the mid-1980s, such as drought, floods, economic crisis and civil strife. Furthermore, the Sudan was a vast, least developed country with limited financial resources and a weak infrastructure.

3. In the light of those constraints and in response to the country's assistance needs, the Government had cooperated with the United Nations in elaborating Operation Lifeline Sudan to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to those trapped in the war zones. During the visit by the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to the Sudan earlier in the year, a joint statement had been issued by the Government and the United Nations reaffirming the Government's commitment to Operation Lifeline Sudan, and agreement had been reached on ensuring access to numerous destinations in the southern part of the country.

4. The conclusion in the report that there had been little improvement in the basic situation was inconsistent with the bulk of the information provided in the report. The deterioration of the situation in some areas had been due to in-fighting in the rebel movement, while other regrettable incidents, such as the death of expatriate relief workers, were bound to recur unless the conflict could be peacefully resolved. The Sudan therefore welcomed the efforts by the President of Nigeria to reactivate peace negotiations between the Government and the rebel factions, which should facilitate the access of relief efforts to those in need, allow the return of the war-displaced to their homes and release energies and resources for reconstruction and development efforts throughout the country.

(Mr. Abu Auf, Sudan)

5. Prospects for 1993 had been brightened by recent encouraging developments, such as the good grain harvest, estimated at 4 million to 5 million tons, with a surplus of 1 million tons, most of which would be exported in order to stabilize sorghum prices, encourage farmers to replant sorghum and earn hard currency necessary for essential agricultural inputs. The Sudan would not need to import grain in 1993 and had already donated 100,000 tons to the World Food Programme (WFP) for relief programmes in the country and abroad. Non-food assistance, supplementary feeding items and transport would, however, be needed for 1993, and efforts should be made to develop emergency recovery and rehabilitation programmes.

6. Internal displacement in the Sudan was the consequence of drought and other natural disasters but primarily of military hostilities in the southern part of the country, which had created large refugee settlements in the border zones between the northern and southern States. He regretted that his country's calls since 1988 for international help in resettling displaced persons in their places of origin had gone unheeded. The Government had developed a resettlement programme for displaced persons living around Khartoum and would require further assistance in resettling the war-displaced when the situation improved, as well as in reconstructing and rehabilitating the war-torn zones.

7. While some non-governmental organizations were doing good work, they had a negative attitude to all Governments and viewed the United Nations and its agencies as inefficient bureaucracies. Nevertheless, the Sudan recognized the useful role they played and cooperated with a number of such organizations, which were currently closely involved in Operation Lifeline Sudan and other emergency programmes and represented in all relief coordination bodies. His Government intended to continue its cooperation with national and international non-governmental organizations.

8. A number of internationally prominent persons had visited the Sudan and diplomats based in Khartoum had travelled to emergency areas elsewhere in the country to gain first-hand information. The Government welcomed such visits in the belief that greater understanding and cooperation were essential if humanitarian assistance was to be provided in a timely and efficient manner, and it pledged its willingness to cooperate with the international community in carrying out that task, hoping, in return, to receive greater support and less unwarranted criticism.

9. Mr. MSENGEZI (Zimbabwe), speaking on agenda item 87 (b), said that during 1992 the southern African region had been afflicted by certain momentous and traumatic experiences, notably the drought, unparalleled in living memory, which would drastically reduce crop yields, threatening 18 million people with starvation and undermining the social and economic structures of several countries in the region. The drought's impact on the vulnerable sections of the population had assumed catastrophic proportions, while severe water shortages were affecting rural populations, schools,

(Mr. Msengezi, Zimbabwe)

hospitals and clinics and leading to an alarming increase in diarrhoeal and infectious diseases. The drought had decimated the regions livestock herd and had had severe consequences for wildlife-based tourism, biological diversity and opportunities for appropriate land management.

10. The already grim refugee situation in the region had been compounded, further weakening the economies of the countries affected. Meanwhile, most countries were implementing arduous structural adjustment programmes, which, in combination with the need to import large amounts of grain, were severely straining their economies and placing unprecedented demands on their transport and logistical infrastructures.

11. Zimbabwe commended the international community on its positive and generous response to the joint United Nations/Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC) appeal and the operational and specialized agencies of the United Nations system on their coordinated and timely response to the disaster situation in the region. That response and the spirit of cooperation between the United Nations system and SADCC demonstrated the potential benefits of greater North-South understanding and cooperation. At the same time, Zimbabwe noted with disquiet the very slow conversion of pledges to actual disbursements or shipments and the slow and uneven response to the non-food requirements contained in the joint appeal. The complementarity between the region's food and non-food needs was vital. Moreover, as the passage from relief to rehabilitation and development was a continuum, he hoped that emergency assistance would support recovery and long-term development, in accordance with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/182.

12. The countries of southern Africa planned to establish a Southern African Development Community (SADC), dedicated to the goals of deeper economic cooperation and integration, freedom, social justice and peace and security for all the peoples of southern Africa, and hoped that the region would enjoy continued support and strengthened cooperation with the international community. The southern Africa of the future would need all the assistance possible from the international community to overcome the legacy of colonialism, racism and apartheid. The persistence of the apartheid system in South Africa would continue to aggravate the economic and social problems faced by the front-line and other neighbouring States. His delegation therefore called upon all concerned parties in South Africa to make every effort to resume the negotiation process, which, he hoped, would lead to the attainment of a non-racial and democratic South Africa and to peace and development throughout the region.

13. Ms. ASHRAF (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)), speaking on agenda item 144, said that there was a clear relationship between emergency relief, rehabilitation and development and that the energies of all the organizations of the United Nations system should be channelled into the vital work of peace-building. The most

(Ms. Ashraf, UNESCO)

important tasks facing the Republic of Croatia were peace and reconstruction. Aware of the sufferings of the people of Croatia, the Executive Board of UNESCO had unanimously condemned the atrocities and violations of basic human rights committed in the former Yugoslavia. The Board had expressed strong support for actions carried out by UNESCO in coordination with other organizations of the United Nations system.

14. UNESCO, which sought to promote a culture of peace through its programmes, was receiving increasingly frequent appeals from parties to conflicts in different regions of the world to use its moral influence to explore new systems of mediation and to assist in the laying of foundations for reconciliation. Since such a role was completely new to the organization, it could perform it only in close collaboration and coordination with the United Nations.

15. The Director-General of UNESCO had recently sent an education mission to Croatia to gather information on the most urgent educational needs of children displaced by war. After holding discussions with national and international authorities and representatives of refugees, the mission was expected to propose appropriate forms of assistance to be undertaken by UNESCO in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to ensure the basic right to education of school-age refugees.

16. The United Nations system was gradually moving from mere coordination to genuine cooperation. The efforts of UNESCO over the past few years had sought to make a specific contribution to the renewed United Nations effort to build peace. What was needed now more than ever before was a dialogue and a well-planned coordinated strategy for assistance, rehabilitation and capacity-building.

17. Mr. NOBILO (Croatia), speaking on agenda item 144, said that as a result of the brutal invasion by Serbia, his country was facing one of the worst and most complex man-made crises in recent history, the consequences of which were spreading to the countries of Eastern and Central Europe. Prior to that aggression, Croatia had had rather good prospects for transition to a market economy. Serbia's aggression had resulted in thousands of deaths and millions of refugees and displaced persons, had destroyed nearly 40 per cent of the country's industrial capacity and had damaged a third of the road network while laying waste to bridges and hospitals and 200 highly prized cultural monuments.

18. The refugee problem, however, aggravated by the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, placed the heaviest burden on the country's already fragile economy. While his delegation was grateful for the immense humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations agencies, programmes and Member States to all the countries of the former Yugoslavia, particularly Croatia, it

(Mr. Nobilo, Croatia)

believed that time was running out and that efforts needed to be focused on the problems of recovery. Indeed, the quick recovery of the Republic of Croatia could facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Bosnia and Herzegovina and the reintegration of an ethnically diverse Croatia. His delegation therefore wished to make an urgent appeal to the United Nations and its Member States for assistance.

19. Mr. ASAHI (Japan), speaking on agenda item 144, said that his Government had actively participated in all the international community's efforts to bring about peace and political reconciliation in the former Yugoslavia. The Japanese Government was deeply troubled by the systematic violation of the human rights of innocent people and felt deep sympathy for those who had been forced to flee their homes as well as those who had been unable to escape from the war zones. His delegation appealed to all the parties concerned to exercise maximum restraint and observe the cease-fire agreements, respect the basic human rights of all people and cooperate fully with UNHCR, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and other international organizations in the provision of humanitarian assistance. He paid a special tribute to UNHCR, UNPROFOR, UNICEF, WFP, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and commended the States members of the European Community and the United States of America for their valuable contributions to humanitarian relief activities.

20. For its part, the Government of Japan had, pursuant to paragraph 4 of Security Council resolution 770 (1992), contributed $18.5 million towards emergency relief supplies to help civilians survive the coming winter. In addition, Japan's private sector had raised over $1 million to aid victims of the violence in the former Yugoslavia.

21. The case of the former Yugoslavia illustrated both the potential of humanitarian action and the extent to which it was linked to peace-keeping and peacemaking activities. He renewed his Government's commitment to providing humanitarian assistance to those in need and to cooperating in the concerted efforts of the international community to that end.

22. Speaking on agenda item 87, he noted that the United Nations and SADCC had held a joint United Nations/SADCC pledging conference at Geneva in June 1992 for humanitarian relief to those suffering from the effects of the drought in southern Africa. His Government had provided a total of $110 million in bilateral emergency humanitarian assistance to nine southern African countries and had extended another $60 million in debt relief and medical and rehabilitation projects to a number of countries in the region. In addition, it had extended, through WFP, aid totalling 1 billion yen to refugees, displaced persons and the local population in drought-ravaged countries.

23. The Government of Japan supported the endeavours of African nations to meet the challenges arising from the difficult transition to democracy and

(Mr. Asahi, Japan)

free-market economies and had therefore offered to join the Global Coalition for Africa in sponsoring an international conference on development in Africa, to be held in Tokyo, with a view to sensitizing the international community to the need for understanding and support for development in Africa.

24. Mr. KUDRYAVTSEV (Russian Federation), speaking on agenda item 144, said that his delegation supported the international community's readiness to provide assistance to Croatia in order to alleviate the consequences of war and facilitate its recovery. In the future, similar humanitarian action could be extended to other republics of the former Yugoslavia whose economies had suffered significant damage. In the short term, international assistance must focus on efforts to bring about an early settlement of the crisis in the former Yugoslavia by political means, and on ending all forms of confrontation. The Security Council, together with other relevant international mechanisms, was already taking the necessary steps in that regard.

25. The Russian Federation planned to contribute to the recovery of Croatia's war-ravaged economy principally through bilateral cooperation. In view of the fact that a number of sectors of the Croatian economy had formerly been geared to exports to his country, the Russian Federation and Croatia were now taking joint steps to restore the ties that had been disrupted by the war and the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. A solid basis had been laid for further development of Russian-Croatian economic cooperation with the signature in August 1992 of an agreement between the two countries on trade and economic cooperation and a protocol on commodity circulation for 1992.

26. Mr. RAGUZ (Bosnia and Herzegovina), speaking on agenda item 144, said that, as a fellow victim of Serbian aggression, his country understood the need to rebuild the economy and infrastructure of nations that had faced such tragedies. His delegation was particularly concerned at the situation in Croatia, a country which, in spite of its own tribulations, had demonstrated the strong and historical friendship between the two Republics by absorbing more than 500,000 refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

27. Some 12 per cent of Croatia's entire housing stock had been razed or irreparably damaged. Deliveries of humanitarian aid and the reconstruction of Croatia had been severely impeded by the destruction of roads and bridges. Most of the 20,000 or more persons wounded during the war in Croatia could not receive adequate treatment because of the destruction of hospitals and health care units. Educational facilities, cultural monuments and churches had also been damaged or destroyed in the efforts of Serbia and Montenegro to erase any Croatian presence. His delegation fully understood the impact of the destruction of infrastructure and deplored the apparent absence of resolute action to end the devastation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, it looked with optimism to a time when both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina would be rebuilt, and it wholeheartedly endorsed the actions called for in the draft resolution on the reconstruction of Croatia.

AGENDA ITEM 12: REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (continued)

Draft resolution on privatization (A/C.2/47/L.23)

28. Mrs. von ECKARTSBERG (United States of America) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/47/L.23 on behalf of the sponsors.

Draft resolution on implications of the application of the new criteria for identifying the least developed countries in the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s (A/C.2/47/L.34)

29. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77. The Group hoped that, in the ensuing informal consultations a text commanding consensus could be agreed upon.

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued)

(a) TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft resolution on strengthening international organizations in the area of multilateral trade (A/C.2/47/L.31)

30. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77. The Group hoped that the Committee would be able to endorse the draft resolution unanimously following informal consultations.

Draft resolution on specific measures in favour of island developing countries (A/C.2/47/L.33)

31. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77. The sponsors hoped that during informal consultations it would be possible to arrive at a consensus text that could be unanimously endorsed.

AGENDA ITEM 86: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE FINANCING OF DEVELOPMENT (continued)

Draft decision on financing of development (A/C.2/47/L.27)

32. Mr. SHAUKAT (Pakistan), introducing the draft decision on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that were members of the Group of 77, said that the Group had already presented its views on the question in a previous statement. It attached importance to further exploration of the possibilities for convening such an international conference and favoured retaining the item on the agenda of the Committee at its next session.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.